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60 Years of Navy Medical Research Helps Save Lives Today
<http://navymedicine.med.navy.mil/mednews.cfm?iss=86&art=01>
Nationally Renowned Heart Specialist Joins Navy Medicine
<http://navymedicine.med.navy.mil/mednews.cfm?iss=86&art=02>
NEHC, NEXCOM Ready for Great American Smoke Out Day
<http://navymedicine.med.navy.mil/mednews.cfm?iss=86&art=03>
Pensacola Hospital Housing Unit Achieves 5-Star Rating
<http://navymedicine.med.navy.mil/mednews.cfm?iss=86&art=04>
Bethesda Physical Therapy Embraces Fish Philosophy
<http://navymedicine.med.navy.mil/mednews.cfm?iss=86&art=05>
Key West Clinic Lauded By Interagency Task Force East
Jacksonville Performs Its First Vision-Correction
Surgery
Rota Hospital Deploys to Morocco for Medical Exercise
<http://navymedicine.med.navy.mil/mednews.cfm?iss=86&art=08>
HealthWatch: Hygiene Is Key to Healthy Teeth and Gums
<http://navymedicine.med.navy.mil/mednews.cfm?iss=86&art=09>
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60 Years of Navy Medical Research Helps Save Lives Today
By Bureau of Medicine and Surgery Public Affairs

SILVER SPRING, Md. - Naval medical research celebrated its 60 birthday with cakes, speeches and reflections on accomplishments that have contributed to keeping Sailors and Marines healthy and played an important role in international scientific and medical research advancements.

"Naval medical research has played a remarkable role in scientific history," said Navy Medicine's historian, Mr. Jan Herman, who spoke at the celebration. "Naval medical researchers established the world's first tissue bank, back in 1949. It's been used as a model for setting up tissue banks through the world. In 1961, naval medicine researchers were helping with space research as a part of Stratolab V, the hydrogen balloon that flew nearly 114,000 feet into the stratosphere, establishing a world record of manned balloon flight. Unfortunately, that feat that was consigned to obscurity when Commander Alan Shepard took his famous 15-minute ride into space aboard (the spacecraft) Mercury the very next day.

"Naval medical researchers were not totally out of the space business, though. Indeed, they played a key

role in training the original Mercury astronauts who followed," continued Herman. "In 1966, Naval medical researchers. They also worked with America's best-known aviator, Charles A. Lindbergh, to develop a heart-lung machine."

He also spoke of naval medical research from the recent past, including breakthrough work in organ transplantation that may greatly increase transplant success.

While Herman noted Navy medical research's yesterdays, Chief of Naval Research, Rear Adm. Jay Cohen spoke of the extraordinary work naval researchers are engaged in today for the future.

He singled out the research being done to develop a new generation of vaccines that he call "agile." These vaccines may be quickly tailored to become just-in-time inoculations against bacteria, viruses or other pathogens that have emerged or re-engineered to make existing vaccines ineffective. One of the potential advantages of this new technology is that production from start to finish might take a matter of months, not years.

"Those researchers (who are working on the new technology) - in ten years, I expect to see them competing for the Nobel prize in medicine," he said.

Other naval research focuses on infectious diseases, combat casualty care, bone marrow, and biological defense.

"I will tell you that the research you do today is cutting edge," said Cohen to the researchers. "Congress loves you."

The Naval Medical Research Center, previously known as the Naval Medical Research Institute, is the Navy's center for scientific research on various diseases and operational problems that affect the health, safety and readiness of Navy and Marine Corps personnel. From its modest beginning in 1942, it evolved into the Navy's largest biomedical research facility with four subordinate activities and a staff of more than 740 personnel.

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Nationally Renowned Heart Specialist Joins Navy Medicine
By JO2 Ellen Maurer, National Naval Medical Center
Bethesda

BETHESDA, Md. - Before Warren Laskey became a doctor, he wanted to be a cowboy.

To the benefit of medicine, he's not riding the range, but is one of the nation's most renown interventional cardiologists, and, thanks in part to his adventurous spirit, he's in the Navy now, albeit as a civilian.

Laskey said he didn't see himself with the Navy, but serendipity took over.

"I was looking for a change in my life when I heard about the job opening at NNMCM (National Naval Medical Center Bethesda)," said Laskey. "So, I came to the hospital and when I met with other staff members from the cardiology clinic, I immediately noticed a difference; the way the military seemed to have a common bond and a respectable operating principle."

But what tipped the scales for Laskey is what Capt. David Ferguson, Medical Corps, cardiologist and director of Bethesda's restorative care directorate, did after the visit.

"We were walking out to the parking lot and Dr. Ferguson saw a wrapper, or something, on the ground, and stopped to pick it up," said Laskey. "That's what did it for me. I figured if he cared that much about this place, then this was a place I wanted to work."

Laskey is now the new chief of interventional cardiovascular medicine at NNMCM, a job that includes helping his staff advance their skills and knowledge. His cohorts are thrilled that he's on board.

"Dr. Laskey's recent recruitment is one more example of our commitment to providing high quality specialty care and distinguished medical education as we care for our patients," said Ferguson. "Combined with our long-standing and highly successful relationship with Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery Services of Fairfax, Va., NNMCM now offers the finest state-of-the-art care in cardiovascular medicine in the National Capital Region."

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NEHC, NEXCOM Ready for Great American Smoke Out Day
By Navy Environmental Health Center Norfolk Public
Affairs

Tobacco users, mark your calendar! The Great American Smoke Out is Nov. 21, and the Navy Environmental Health Center (NEHC) and the Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) are teaming to help you kick the habit. Smokers and dippers visiting 21 Navy Exchanges throughout the United States and Italy on that day may pick up a free Quitter's Survival Pack while supplies last.

"We understand that kicking the tobacco habit can be very difficult," said Rear Adm. William J. Maguire, NEXCOM's Commander. "We want to do our part to make quitting as easy as possible for our customers who use tobacco products. We're happy to support the Navy's initiative to encourage a healthier lifestyle."

The Quitter's Survival Pack contains some of those got-to-have items people need when they're trying to stop tobacco. Several of NEXCOM's vendors donated gum, mints and coupons for smoking cessation medication.

Staff members from local military treatment facility health promotion programs will be on hand at

the Navy Exchanges, distributing Quitter's Survival Packs and other materials, and will offer support and advice on quitting.

"Stopping the use of tobacco products is the single best thing that Sailors, Marines and their families can do to improve their health," said Dr. Mark Long, a psychologist who is the tobacco cessation program manager at NEHC. "The Great American Smoke Out offers an opportunity to kick tobacco for the day, and hopefully for good."

According to Long, wanting to stop, having a plan and preparing for potential difficulties helps tobacco users quit, and that's the purpose of the Great American Smoke Out. He suggests that if you are a non-smoker, help a friend quit for the day, and if you are a current tobacco user, plan to join this year's Smoke Out.

Navy Exchanges participating in this program include Little Creek, Norfolk and Oceana, Va.; Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; Jacksonville, Mayport and Pensacola, Fla.; San Diego and North Island, Calif.; Bangor, Bremerton, Everett and Whidbey Island, Wash.; Bethesda, Md.; Charleston, S.C.; Memphis, Tenn.; Corpus Christi, Texas; Great Lakes, Ill.; New London, Conn.; Newport, R.I.; and Sigonella, Italy.

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Pensacola Hospital Housing Unit Achieves 5-Star Rating By JO2 Scott New, Naval Hospital Pensacola

PENSACOLA, Fla. - Naval Hospital Pensacola's bachelor enlisted housing has been selected for the Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt Award for excellence, joining an elite group that has achieved the equivalent of a 5-star hotel rating.

Even with this honor, the pace to make the housing the best residence possible hasn't slowed.

"You see my board (of things to do) is still full," said Mess Management Specialist Chief Petty Officer (Surface Warfare) Ronald Brooks, the general services division officer for the hospital's operating management department. "We've got a lot more work to do over there."

The hospital's Burns Hall Bachelor Enlisted Housing recently underwent an overhaul that would make a plastic surgeon proud. New carpet, fresh paint, new furniture, and landscaping are just a few of the upgrades that were key in making it a 5-star establishment.

The hospital's executive officer, Capt. Peter F. O'Connor, Medical Service Corps, credits Brooks for much of the renovation's success.

"It's not a surprise," said O'Connor. "Watching Chief Brooks' leadership was inspiring to see."

Striving to improve quality of life for his Sailors, Brooks knew that to accomplish a mission of this magnitude would take a partnership with others on

the hospital staff. He teamed his staff with others from various departments, pulling together to ultimately form a 'comfort zone' for Sailors.

"Even though we have an old building," Brooks said, "I wanted to have a feeling of comfort when you walk into a room. I think (the inspector for the Zumwalt awards) had that feeling during his visit."

More improvements are coming for the 'Q. Second phone lines and cable television connections will be added to each room.

"It's great," said Hospital Apprentice Anthony Kuskie, who arrived in June 2002 and has seen the facility's transformation. "People will begin to show even more pride in what they have and treat it like it's their own."

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Bethesda Physical Therapy Embraces Fish Philosophy
By Lt. Paula Godes, Medical Service Corps, National
Naval Medical Center Bethesda

BETHESDA, Md. - Things have gotten fishy at the physical therapy clinic at the National Naval Medical Center Bethesda.

Fish pictures are displayed throughout the clinic and a live fish mascot is located in the gym. The mascot's name is PeTey, for P.T. clinic, of course.

It started about four months ago when Cmdr. Patti Ireland, Medical Service Corps, introduced her staff to the "fish philosophy," a customer service concept created by a famous fish market in Seattle.

The fish market focuses on how to create a world class experience for its customers, while making the workplace rewarding for employees. Its philosophy is about self-empowerment. Embracing this philosophy is embracing four basic principles to making a difference for your patients, your co-workers and yourself. They are:

- Choose your attitude. Regardless of environment, we all choose how we react. We can react positively, or we can react negatively and affect everyone around us. A positive attitude is contagious, a warm smile is often reciprocated, and this is what the physical therapy staff works to exhibit everyday. They feel fortunate to have a job they love, but even mundane tasks can be approached with the attitude that there is always a choice about the way one does work, even if there is not a choice about the work itself.

Choosing a positive attitude is very easy for the always upbeat for the PT clinic's Hospital Corpsman Second Class Milton Koroma.

"I think of myself as my patients, and then treat them how I would want to be treated," he said.

- Play. When you order fish at the market, they may throw it at you to test your catching reflexes.

This is usually met with much laughter at the absurdity of fish flying through the air and the more-than-occasional missed catch, but the idea is to make any task fun.

While throwing at patients is usually not a good idea, the PT clinic works to make the patient's experience of rehabilitation a pleasant and rewarding one. This is evident from patients' comments on follow-up exams to the therapists remarking on the skill and competency of the staff, as well as their great attitude. Play doesn't mean sloppy work; it means being serious about the work, without taking yourself too seriously. Hospital Corpsman Second Class Cathy Werling incorporates play into work by charging 25 cents for grumbling, which is used toward PeTey's fish food.

- Make your patient's day. Fun engages patients in ways that create energy and goodwill. Another way to accomplish this is to make their day. Little things technicians and therapists do for patients, like squeezing in a patient during lunch or staying late for a treatment because they were delayed by traffic tells patients they're important, and that you genuinely care about their progress.

- Be there. Quite simply, be mentally, emotionally and physically present for your patient. The PT staff works to focus on each and every patient individually, to listen to his or her concerns, and address their needs to the best of their ability. Hospital Corpsman Second Class Dawn Waiksnis said she does that by taking the time to write down an explanation of the treatment given, and explain it orally in detail to the patient to help them understand why it will help them.

The fish philosophy is energizing. Even on tough busy days, the PT staff members remind each other it's their choice how they react to it, and support each other in their work to better serve the patients.

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Key West Clinic Lauded By Interagency Task Force East
From Naval Hospital Jacksonville Public Affairs

KEY WEST, Fla. - U.S. Coast Guard Rear Adm. R. Dennis Sirois, director of Joint Interagency Task Force East (JIATF), recently presented a certificate of appreciation to Naval Branch Medical Clinic, Key West for "outstanding service and support to the men and women of Joint Interagency Task Force East."

JIATF Command Master Chief Dave Evans coordinated the "thank you" for Sirois, who wanted to recognize the clinic as an organization that was "best at taking care of his people." Evans polled his Navy, Army, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, civilian, and contract personnel, and heard the same accolades for Naval Branch Medical Clinic Key West and its sister clinic, Naval Branch Dental Clinic Key West.

"(These) clinics should be the bench mark in the Navy for good customer service," said Evans. He praised the clinics' response to any problems members of the task force might experience.

"All our people know if they make a negative comment on a patient satisfaction card, they will get a call the next day asking for information," said Evans.

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Jacksonville Performs Its First Vision-Correction Surgery

By Seaman Timothy Yost, Naval Hospital Jacksonville

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. - Naval Hospital Jacksonville performed its first photorefractive keratectomy (PRK) surgery, becoming the fourth Navy clinic to provide the vision-correcting surgery.

The surgery was recently approved for all active-duty service members to correct near-sightedness and astigmatisms.

Jacksonville's first surgery was performed by Capt. David Davis, Medical Corps, on Hospital Corpsman Third Class Jeremy Schlotterer.

As required for all surgery candidates, Schlotterer first received a full ophthalmologic exam. Once selected, he was given a step-by-step description of the entire process, including the risks and benefits.

After the surgery, he was pleasantly surprised about the ease and the lack of pain. "I didn't feel a thing," Schlotterer said. "It tickled my eyelashes." He was back at work in less than five days.

While the surgery is an important quality of life benefit for active duty personnel, Davis said eyeglass-free Sailors and Marines benefits the Navy and Marine Corps.

"The Navy is paying for the surgery on the grounds that it makes people more effective...through periscopes, night vision goggles, for shooting rifles in the humidity or rain. It also helps people to get in and out of boats, for donning fire fighting equipment, and Minimum Mission Oriented Protective Posture (MOPP) gear. Also, contact lenses may soak up chemicals and dust," he said.

PRK is now being offered at National Naval Medical Center Bethesda, Md.; Naval Medical Centers San Diego and Portsmouth, Va.; and Naval Hospital Jacksonville. Naval Hospitals Camp Lejeune, S.C., Bremerton, Wash.; and Camp Pendleton, Calif. are expected to offer PRK within the next year.

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Rota Hospital Deploys to Morocco for Medical Exercise

By Lt. Jennifer Miles and Hospital Corpsman Second Class Sabrina Tashiro, U.S. Naval Hospital Rota

ROTA, Spain - A team of 12 from U. S. Naval

Hospital Rota deployed to Tangier, Morocco, recently to participate in the weeklong MEDSHARK 02 exercise with the Royal Moroccan Armed Forces. The exercise involved managing mass casualties aboard a deployed ship then triaging and transporting them ashore for further evacuation to a civilian hospital. The hospital staff collaborated with members of the Moroccan Army, Navy, Air Force, Public Health Service, and Civil Defense Protection Service.

To prepare for the mass casualty drill, several days of training were conducted aboard the Royal Moroccan Navy ship, BDC Sidi Mohammed Ben Abdellah (formerly USS Bristol County). The staff from U.S. Naval Hospital Rota taught classes for the ship's company on a number of topics, including managing a mass casualty disaster, treating minor wound patients and triaging and transporting the more seriously injured to civilian facilities ashore. Trauma management classes were also conducted throughout the week for military and civilian doctors, nurses and emergency service personnel.

The week culminated with a mass casualty drill in which a large simulated explosion aboard the Moroccan vessel activated a chain of events that spread to the streets of Tangier and finished at Hospital Muhammad V, the local general hospital. A total of 20 patients, all made up in realistic moulage to simulate injuries sustained in such an explosion, were extricated from the bowels of the ship to a triage station on the pier. On the pier, military medical personnel treated and triaged patients, transporting the most seriously injured to the hospital for further treatment. At the hospital, the civilian medical staff expertly managed all the simulated patients, as well as the regular influx of real patients.

Cmdr. David Lane, Medical Corps, Rota's team leader, concluded that the exercise was a success for both his team and the Moroccans.

"The Moroccans seemed pleased with the training and with the mass casualty drill," he said. "Our team worked hard, and had a lot of fun while doing it. I think we made a number of lasting friendships."

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HealthWatch: Hygiene Is Key to Healthy Teeth and Gums
By Brian Badura, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

WASHINGTON, DC - Dental health is much more than having white, cavity-free teeth. It means good dental hygiene with regular brushing, flossing and dental check ups.

October is National Dental Hygiene Month, so let's review the basics of dental care. Bacteria and plaque are enemies of your teeth and gums. When left unchecked, they can lead to periodontal, or gum disease.

"People should brush their teeth 2 to 3 times a day with a fluoride toothpaste, and floss once a day to maintain sound dental health," said Capt. Kim Diefenderfer, Dental Corps, the Navy's specialty leader for preventive dentistry.

Use a soft-bristled brush and clean all accessible surfaces of the teeth. Gently brush along the gum line as well, since this is a common buildup point for bacteria.

Follow brushing by cleaning between teeth using a cleaner like floss. Flossing helps remove plaque from between teeth - a place toothbrushes often can't reach.

After flossing, rinse your mouth with water to wash away loose food particles and bacteria.

"Some people can benefit from the use of fluoride rinses if they are at risk for cavities, but basic brushing and flossing is fine for most people," said Diefenderfer.

Another essential component to good dental health is seeing your dentist twice a year for a checkup. These exams allow your dentist to thoroughly clean your teeth and check for tooth decay. More importantly, they can also look for the onset of serious dental problems like gum disease and oral cancer.

Should you notice signs of more serious problems, be sure to schedule a visit to your dental provider to get them checked out.

"Red swollen gum tissue and sores that are recurrent or last longer than a day or two or gums that bleed when you brush should be evaluated by a dental professional," Diefenderfer said.

If you think dental care is no big deal and more cosmetic than anything, think again. Poor dental health is serious business, so much so that the U.S. Surgeon General reported in 2000 how the mouth is a "mirror for health and well-being."

Developing gum disease has been linked by research to more serious health conditions. When you have gum disease, bacteria in your teeth and gums can be pumped into the bloodstream every time you chew. For some people, this leads to increased risk for other diseases affecting the body, such as heart disease and stroke.

Do the right thing for sound dental hygiene. Take care of teeth and gums by spending a few minutes each day brushing and flossing. It may help avoid serious problems later on, which is something to smile about.

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